



## Northern Ambition Academies Trust

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Date: 09/12/2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well as we fast approach the season for relaxing and spending some time with those we love.

This has been a challenging year, one I am sure we will never forget. The increased pressures we have all faced, in both our work and personal lives, have been vast. As we come to the end of the autumn term for our schools, I would like to take some time to reflect on how we have managed our way through these difficult times since the reopening of all schools back in September.

It would be remiss of me though, to not begin by thanking you for your continued support and understanding. Without this and without your children in our schools, we would not have been able to operate as effectively as we have done and continue to do, and would not have been able to ensure all of our pupils are back on track with their learning. Your children have been amazing. They have embraced their learning and have adapted superbly well to the new ways in which schools must now operate. Well done to them!

Although you may not always understand or agree with some of the measures we are taking and changes we are making during this pandemic, what I do see is a collective appreciation for how hard it is currently for schools, their staff and their pupils, and an understanding that we do what we know is best for our schools and our pupils at all times. The superb attendance seen across the Trust since reopening is testament to your confidence in us and I can only thank you again for believing that the best place for your child, is in school. As at the 26<sup>th</sup> November, the national attendance in state-funded primary schools was 88%, and in state-funded secondary schools 78%. Locally, as at 30<sup>th</sup> November, attendance stands at 86% (Primary 88%, Secondary 82%). **I am delighted to say that our Trust cumulative attendance figure is currently 93.1% (Primary 93.5%, Secondary 92.3%), way above both local and national figures!**

As always at NAAT, we try to overcome any challenges and barriers we may face, aiming always to be sensible but brave in the choices we make. We have had to do some things differently this year, such as parents' evenings, reporting on pupil progress, parent workshops, celebration events, trips and visits etc. We have had to communicate with you more frequently and sometimes differently. You and your children have had to quickly adapt to the new way of operating in our schools and the new way of accessing their education if at home remote learning. Achieving success in all of this does not happen overnight and we will continue to work hard to communicate any future changes with you and to ensure that all our school communities get the best deal possible in these difficult times. We will continue to drive forward our school improvement plans over the remainder of this academic year and we will maintain our Trust wide expectation of sky-high standards, amongst both staff and pupils. I feel that this in particular has never been more important. However, none of this is achievable if we don't look after each other. The wellbeing of our staff and of our pupils remains a top priority for us – without either, there are no schools.

As we countdown to Christmas, we are all undoubtedly reflecting on how difficult this time of year can be for many families, even more so at the moment. I am proud that our Trust recognises this each year by collecting donations from their school communities to give to local foodbanks. On behalf of the Trust, thank you for your very generous contributions again this year. The impact of your kindness must never be underestimated.

### **SCHOOL CLOSURE – FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER**

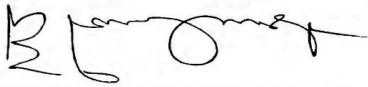
The Department for Education communicated yesterday with all school leaders to issue guidance on end of term planning. As part of this correspondence, it outlines the important role which school leaders will play in contact tracing and helping in the national effort to limit the spread of the virus. To ensure that staff get the time off they need and deserve, schools have been advised to use an additional INSET day, changing Friday 18th December to a non-teaching day, in which the school is closed to all staff and pupils. As a result, for all schools in the Trust, the last day of term will now be Thursday 17th December. Schools will be closed to staff and pupils on Friday 18th December and your child's school will communicate their plans for the last day of term directly to you.

The DfE recognise that this communication has been shared late in the term with school leaders and therefore you, as parents and carers, are also receiving this information at very short notice. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

All schools will be fully closed for the Christmas break, **welcoming all pupils back on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021** with Monday 4<sup>th</sup> being a calendared Trust wide staff training day.

Please do stay safe over the festive season. I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and brighter 2021.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Fairhurst', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Elizabeth Fairhurst**

*Chief Executive*

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